



# Working together for a safer Scotland



**SCOTTISH**  
**FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

Working together for a safer Scotland

## **SUMMARY OF OUR STRATEGIC PLAN**



# The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service is Scotland's new, single fire and rescue service.

This publication summarises our strategic plan 2013-2016. It explains who we are, what we are setting out to do and what this means to people and communities across Scotland.

If you would like to read the strategic plan in full, please contact us at SFRS HQ, 5 Whitefriars Crescent, Perth, PH2 0PA, telephone - 01738 475260 email - [strategicplan@firescotland.gov.uk](mailto:strategicplan@firescotland.gov.uk)

The summary also invites people, groups and organisations to give us their views of this plan. It has the following parts:

1. About us
2. About our service in Scotland
3. Our vision and values
4. How we plan to improve our services
5. Our targets and how we plan to meet them
6. Our initial focus, finances and who scrutinises us
7. Why this strategic plan matters
8. Tell us what you think

# 1. About us

This part of the strategy explains who we are, what changes people can expect, and what will not change. It explains how we contribute to the Scottish Government's aims for public services. This part also summarises Section 1 of our strategic plan 2013-2016.

We, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS), have replaced Scotland's eight previous fire and rescue services, and joint fire and rescue boards. These ceased to exist on 31 March 2013.

## **What remains the same**

Our primary duties are the same as those of our predecessors. We continue to focus on protecting communities through fire prevention, and we remain equipped and ready to respond to emergencies.

Our role remains that of improving the safety and wellbeing of people throughout Scotland.

Because our day-to-day activities remain business as usual, some people may not have immediately realised that the former eight Scottish fire and rescue services had merged into one new service.

## **What is changing**

As a single Scottish fire and rescue service, we can also provide services more flexibly and free from geographical boundaries.

### **A strong, local focus**

A major part of our role is to ensure that communities across Scotland benefit from the creation of a single fire and rescue service. These benefits are as follows.

- To safeguard and improve local services, while spending less money, by reducing duplication and maintaining services where and when they are needed.
- To provide access to specialist services, national expertise and equipment wherever and whenever they are needed.
- To strengthen the connection between the fire service and the communities we serve by creating a new, formal relationship with Scotland's 32 local authorities.

This creates opportunities for many more councillors to have a say in fire and rescue services in their areas.

It also enables us to work effectively with Scotland's community planning partnerships, which bring together councils and other public bodies such as the police and NHS boards.

We are establishing a new role of Local Senior Officer (LSOs). Across Scotland we have 17 LSOs.

They will have a crucial role in working with local people, communities and organisations to identify local priorities and needs.

Our LSOs will develop a total of 32 local plans designed to help us respond to and meet these local priorities and needs.

We play an important role within the public, private and voluntary sector organisations that work to make Scotland's communities safer and stronger.



## How we contribute to the Scottish Government's aims for public services

The Scottish Government publication 'The Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2013' sets out Scottish ministers' expectations for us. It sets out how we should bring together the best from the former eight fire and rescue services, to create a modern, effective and efficient fire service.

It also stresses that this is a continual process.

The Framework sets out 58 priorities for us. These include areas such as:

- working in partnership with local communities and organisations
- prevention: for example, identifying people at particular risk of fire and targeting activities to tackle the risk
- protection: for example protecting communities by enforcing fire safety laws and standards
- response: for example, working with other agencies to assess the risk of major incidents and how to prepare, plan for, respond to and recover from these.

Our activities also contribute to the following Scottish Government priorities and strategies:

- **Scotland's 16 national outcomes:** These describe what the Scottish Government wants to achieve for Scotland. Examples include "We live our lives free from crime, disorder and danger" and "We live longer, healthier lives".
- **Corporate expectations:** These set out how Scottish Ministers expect public bodies to continue improving the services they deliver.
- **Strategy for Justice:** This stresses how public services should work in partnership to continue improving the services they deliver.

## 2. About our service in Scotland

This part explains how we have assessed areas of greatest risk in Scotland. We can use this information along with information about specific local communities to plan the services we provide. This summarises Section 2 of the strategic plan.

We have carried out a detailed assessment of risk across all of Scotland. This provides the information we need to develop our 32 local fire and rescue plans: one for each local authority area in Scotland.

Understanding the areas of greatest risk also enables us to improve the services we deliver. Our assessment covers the particular risks associated with the following.

- **Towns and cities:** for example identifying groups of people and households particularly at risk of accidental fire, and measures that we can promote to prevent fires, such as encouraging householders to fit and maintain smoke alarms.

Our analysis shows that, of 2.2 million households in Scotland, 745,922 are at risk from fire.

- Scotland's airports, power stations, petro-chemical complexes, industry, ports, road and rail networks and the home base of the UK's fleet of nuclear submarines.
- Remote and rural communities and Scotland's 96 inhabited islands.
- Wilderness areas and Scotland's long coastline.
- The impact of tourism: with large numbers of visitors at certain times of the year, and large events in particular areas at various times.



## Our vision

We will be a world-leading fire and rescue service that others look to because our approach of **working together for a safer Scotland** is delivering real improvements in our communities. As a valued partner we will work with the communities of Scotland to make them Safer and Stronger; helping them to help themselves; continuously improving our services to meet local needs and responding when required.



## 3. Our vision and values

This part explains what our vision means, and the values that define how we will work to achieve the vision. This part summarises Section 3 of our strategic plan.

Our vision expresses what we want to achieve for the communities we serve and what we want to be as an organisation

We are developing the values that express how we wish to develop as a service. They are:

- |              |             |
|--------------|-------------|
| • Safety     | • Fairness  |
| • Dignity    | • Integrity |
| • Excellence | • Equality  |
| • Diversity  | • Respect   |

They set out how we will behave as an organisation, both to the communities we serve and to our employees.

Together, our values define how we will work to achieve our vision.



## 4. How we plan to improve our services

This part sets out four strategic aims that we have set out to achieve between now and 2016. It explains why we have developed these aims, and what each means. This part summarises Section 4 of our strategic plan.

We have developed four strategic aims, to help us:

- make our vision a reality
- deliver the benefits of setting up a single fire and rescue service, including the strong, local focus we explained in the first part of this summary
- meet the expectations set out for us in the Scottish Government publication 'The Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2013', which we explained in the first part of this summary.

Our four strategic aims are as follows:

### **1. Improved safety of our communities and staff**

Safety of our communities is the most important of our strategic aims. The remaining three aims help make sure we achieve this efficiently, effectively and fairly.

We will focus on local needs. We will work closely with local people and organisations, and work with communities to help them help themselves.

We will continue work to encourage people to change their behaviour, for example through public safety campaigns.

We will ensure our staff are trained to the highest standards and encourage a culture of continued professional learning and career development in which our people feel motivated. We will recognise and reward good performance and deal fairly and consistently with poor performance.

## 2. More equitable access to fire and rescue services

By equitable access we mean that, as a single fire and rescue service, we can provide communities with access to skills and services that may not previously have been readily available to them.

For example, we can quickly and efficiently move people, specialists and equipment from one part of Scotland if they are needed in another part of the country.

In all 32 local authority areas our Local Senior Officers will take a lead role in working with local people, communities and organisations.

They will share and gather knowledge to give us a clear understanding of the needs of the communities they serve. They will develop local plans to meet these needs.

We will also work with other emergency services and voluntary groups involved in specialist rescue. This will enable us to identify skills and equipment available nationally, and manage how we provide specialist rescue services.

We will combine local plans with our own wider assessment of risks across Scotland. These will enable us to plan how best to:

- **deploy local services using the people and equipment available to us**
- **provide an effective, fair and impartial standard of response across Scotland.**



### 3. Improved outcomes through partnership

Improved outcomes describe the impact that our work has on communities. By sharing information with partners such as local authorities about, for example vulnerable people living in communities, we can target our services and help make people safer in their homes. This would be an example of an improved outcome.

The role of our Local Senior Officers is critical to working in partnership with local people, groups and organisations. In this part of their work, our LSOs will have input and advice from members of our Board.

This arrangement is unique in the public sector and is designed to ensure our role makes a real difference to improving outcomes.

Working together, local partners can work towards common goals and reduce duplication. They can identify potential problems and take action before the problems arise.

We will involve communities through local surveys and public meetings. We will respond positively to ideas from local communities and businesses about how we can better meet their needs.

Partnership working also extends to our staff. We will inform, consult and involve our people in issues that affect them.

We will also work closely with other emergency services, including putting arrangements in place to help them when needed, and ask for their help if we need it.



#### **4. Develop a culture of continuous improvement**

We face greater financial pressures than our predecessors. This is likely to lead to significant changes in our services in the longer term.

So we must have arrangements in place to manage our people and finances most efficiently, while providing high quality, effective services to the communities we serve.

We aim to do this by:

- **managing the resources available to us – people, money and equipment – to best effect**
- **reducing complexity and duplication in systems and processes, for example having single financial and HR systems**
- **looking at what works best and implementing it**
- **creating a workplace that values equality and diversity**
- **ensuring our people have the skills they need and are motivated.**

For our staff we will develop:

- **a workforce strategy that caters for the range of staff roles and working patterns involved in delivering our services**
- **a health and safety policy and processes to ensure a consistent approach to health, safety and wellbeing of all staff**
- **a learning and development strategy that provides for high quality learning and development for all staff.**

We will also be a learning organisation, ensuring arrangements are in place to learn from our own practices and from other fire and rescue services to improve the services we provide.



## 5. Our targets and how we plan to meet them

This part lists six targets we have set ourselves between now and 2016. It summarises each target and how we plan to meet it. This part summarises Section 5 of our strategic plan.

We have set six targets to meet over the next three years. They reflect the range of our activities. Each of the four strategic aims we explained in part 4 of the summary also contributes to meeting these targets.

Our targets are as follows.

### **Reduce fire casualties by 5% each year**

Since 2004, Scotland's former fire and rescue services made significant progress in cutting the number of fires and casualties.

Much of this work has involved working closely with other public bodies, such as the police, housing services and schools.

However Scotland has a higher rate of dwelling house fires than other areas of the UK. More people are injured in fires in the home.

We will continue to build up our understanding of why this is the case, and work with communities to reduce the risk of fire casualties, and to reduce casualties and deaths.

### **Reduce special services casualties**

Special services means the incidents we attend that are not linked to fire. Examples include road traffic collisions, rescuing people who have become trapped, and dealing with flooding.

We aim to maintain the current downward trend in special services incidents and casualties. We will do this by:

- **working closely with communities and partner organisations**
- **making sure our staff have the specialist skills they need to deal with these incidents effectively.**

### **Reduce accidental dwelling fires**

The number of accidental dwelling fires has decreased steadily over the last ten years. We will work closely with communities to educate people about what they can do to reduce the risk of these fires.

We will also set ambitious targets to perform home fire safety visits across Scotland.

### **Reduce the number of non-domestic fires**

Non-domestic premises include businesses and schools. We will work with businesses to reduce fires in workplaces and public buildings.

We will focus on providing a fire advisory service for business, and on promoting fire safety in businesses.

### Reduce firefighter injuries

We ensure our firefighters receive high quality training and development throughout their career, and have the protective and specialist equipment they need.

We will continue to provide high quality training and development programmes, focus on firefighter safety and work towards further reducing firefighter injuries.

### Improve attendance

This target is about the number of days lost to sickness absence by staff. This number has been falling significantly over the last three years.

We aim to reduce it further, for example by developing an Occupational Health, Wellbeing and Fitness service for staff.



## 6. Our initial focus, finances and who scrutinises us

This part explains:

- what we wish to focus on in our first three years
- our financial targets
- how we are run
- who scrutinises us

This part summarises Section 6 of our strategic plan.

We aim to be a world-leading fire and rescue service, with the best staff, equipment, systems and technology serving our communities.

We will continue to build on our strengths and develop our learning as an organisation. We will build and use this to develop our services, so that these improve community safety.

The current financial climate requires us to make significant savings while maintaining the effectiveness of the services we provide.

We will consult with and listen to communities to identify local priorities. This work will be led by our Local Senior Officers, backed by members of our Board, enabling them to develop local plans.

We can combine these with the information we have gathered about risk in Scotland, which we explain in part 2 of this summary. All of this information will help us identify the skills and other resources, such as equipment, that we need to serve each community.

We can also identify areas within communities where we can improve the level of service they have had previously. An example would be our new Scotland-wide fire and investigations team which analyses the causes of fires and identifies trends that we can use to improve our services.

To do all of this, we have set out what we want to focus on in our first three years.

- **In year 1** we will continue the merger and harmonisation of the former eight services, developing a strong foundation for efficiencies and improved practice.
- **In year 2** we will introduce innovations and remove complexity in our processes. This will enable us to continue to change and improve the service we provide.
- **In year 3** we will focus on how we can continue to deliver improved services and make best use of our money, people, skills and equipment.

To deliver the improvements needed to achieve the benefits of a single fire and rescue service we will:

- implement a programme to transform our services
- invest in and involve our people
- develop a strategy for how to use information and communication (ICT) systems to help us achieve our goals.

We will also strengthen our relationships with the individuals, communities and organisations with whom we will work in partnership.

We will develop strategies for how we communicate most effectively with our partners. This is about how we:

- raise awareness of our activities and keep people informed
- encourage people, including our staff, to give us their views
- use the feedback that people give us
- get across vital messages on fire prevention.



### What are our financial targets?

We have two types of budget. The first, our resource budget (known in some organisations as revenue budgets) covers our day-to-day operations.

Our 2013/14 resource budget is £277m. The equivalent for our predecessors was £291m. In addition, we have to pay an extra £6.5m in value added tax (VAT) and just under £2m as a pay award. So we need to cut our costs by £22m from the previous year.

In 2014/15 we expect our resource budget to fall by £12m, and by a further £7m in 2015/16.

Our second budget is our capital budget. We use this to buy equipment such as fire appliances.

Our 2013/14 capital budget is £15.3m. The equivalent for our predecessors was £22m. However we have an additional £2.64m in capital that was already committed by our predecessors for projects that had started before we were set up but had not been completed.

We expect our capital budget to increase to £22.2m in 2014/15, and to £24m in 2015/16.

### How we are run

With the Scottish Government, we have developed a Governance and Accountability Framework that sets out:

- how we must operate as an organisation
- the main roles and responsibilities, including those of our Board, Chief Officers and Local Senior Officers.
- how we are held accountable.

## The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Board

Our Board directs our strategy. It ensures that the service is operating effectively and is implementing the Scottish Government's priorities. Board members are accountable for the Board's actions and decisions. They also scrutinise plans and proposals and hold the Chief Officer and Senior Leadership Team to account.

We are developing arrangements for:

- **regular board meetings**
- **how and where to hold board papers, minutes and other documents such as financial regulations and a register of interests**
- **policies, procedures and practices.**

We will set up a Programme Board to manage how we deliver on the targets and in the areas we describe in part 4 of this summary. The Programme Board will include members drawn from our partners and will report to a committee of our own Board.

Our Board, in turn, will report to the Scottish Government.

We will publish an annual operating plan with detailed actions and regular reports on how we are performing.

## Who scrutinises us?

Audit Scotland and HM Fire Service Inspectorate in Scotland will scrutinise how we perform. They have agreed to co-ordinate their auditing and inspections. They will look at areas such as:

- **how the transition to a single service is affecting the services we provide**
- **how well we are meeting the aims we have set out to meet**
- **how well we are delivering the benefits of moving from eight fire and rescue services to one.**

Audit Scotland previously reviewed aspects of how our predecessors were performing. We are taking forward the findings and recommendations from that review.

## 7. Why this strategic plan matters

This part summarises how this strategic plan influences the business, operational and local plans that we need to provide services to communities. This part summarises Section 7 of our strategic plan.

We are striving to put in place clear, effective national and local plans. These are to make sure that everyone we work with, and who works for us, understands how we can work together to:

- deliver agreed goals
- manage effectively how we perform.

Our strategic plan will help us develop an annual operating plan, business plans and local plans. These, in turn, describe in more detail:

- how we will achieve our targets
- the timescale for achieving them
- how we will monitor how well we are doing.

Development plans for both teams and individual members of staff will also reflect our targets, ensuring a direct link to our strategic, operating, business and local plans.



## 8. Tell us what you think

We want individuals, groups, businesses and organisations to give us their views on our strategic plan.

Our Local Senior Officers would also be pleased to talk to local groups about what the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service is doing in their area.

To tell us what you think of our strategic plan, please contact us at:  
Scottish Fire and Rescue Service HQ,  
5 Whitefriars Crescent,  
Perth,  
PH2 0PA  
Tel: 01738 475260  
Email: [strategicplan@firescotland.gov.uk](mailto:strategicplan@firescotland.gov.uk)

If you would like to arrange a talk by a Local Senior Officer, please contact [Lynne.dickson@firescotland.gov.uk](mailto:Lynne.dickson@firescotland.gov.uk)

This document is a summary of our strategic plan.  
The full plan can be viewed at our website [www.firescotland.gov.uk](http://www.firescotland.gov.uk)







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